

**FIRE DIVERSITY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25,2009**

ATTENDEES:

Luis Gonzalez,Aldora Horne,Atty.Andrew Howe,Robert Jefferson,Sarah Ann Stewart,Carlos Torres,Chief William Rehr,Deputy Jeffrey Squibb,Joe Ayala.

ABSENT:

Rev.Nicholas Camacho,Christine Wheelen.

CALL TO ORDER:

By chair person Robert Jefferson at 5:05PM.

WELCOME // INTRODUCTIONS:

Mr.Jefferson thanks to guest, Atty.Weinbrake, Atty.Ludwig, and all board members

APPROVAL of MINUTES:

FDB minutes of Feb.18,2009 motion to approve by Mr. Torres,second by Miss. Stewart. Motion carried.

OPEN BUSINESS:

Treasurer report will be made at a later date.

Atty.Howe: fire fighter test results update. 440 candidates who took test over two days.307 passed. 8 are female,7 are hispanic, 5 are black. No physical examine scheduled.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Atty. Weinbrake and Atty. Ludwig discussion on Consent Decree.

Thanks to board members who have made a commitment to serve in this board. Atty.Weinbrake is one of the lawyers in this law suit. That was started in 2005 by filling a federal law suit against the city. The plaintiff in the law suit is named Cortney Horne who had unsuccessfully applied to become a Reading fire fighter. The law suit was filed under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A federal law that does not permit job discrimination. The law suit alleges what is called a district impact law suit. Regardless whether or not there has been intentional discrimination. The statistical data is harsh when looking at the number of minorities in the city and the number of minorities in the fire department. A similar case was entered against the city police department a few years ago. The police case was settled with a consent decree. The fire case was settled along the same lines. The consent decree is meant to decrease the money amount for legal fees and the time in courts.Part of the decree is to form a diversity board.Other wise the federal judge would have told the city what must be done.So both parties entered a decree. The fire diversity board has taken a long time to get formed. Many of the dead lines have expired.The city was not allowed to give a fire fighters examine without following the conditions of the decree. It,s believed the city,s intentions is to withdraw the examine. If this does not happen, the plaintiff will be going back to court. The decree must be

amended to specifically say there will be no farther fire fighters examine until certain things are done according to the decree. One thing is that the FDB must develop a recruitment plan that is going to increase the number of minorities applicants. Atty. Weinbrake, Atty. Ludwig, counsel, and the city will work together to present a proposal of changes to the FDB .Then the amended decree will be presented to Judge Sanchez. Atty. Ludwig hopes and expectations is increase the numbers of minorities applicants , increase the success rate and to have a more diverse fire department.

Chief Rehr expressed concern that there 11 vacancies in the fire department now,next year 14 ,which makes 25 vacancies. The paid overtime and training a large number of new employees. Mr. Ayala questioned that the same 400 people who took test the last time will probably take it again. What specific recruitment changes can be made to change the out come? Another concern was the allotted amount of money of only 17,000 dollars. Atty. Howe says all the lawyers will keep these concerns in mind. The city , civil service board and lawyers will have to work on how the test will be given and the methoidology of the test. Mr. Torres asked if voluntaries get extra points like the veterans. Chief Rehr says he has recommended voluntary fire fighters get extra points but the state civil service says it is not legal. Reading is a third class civil service code. He explains he has nothing to do with applications, written or oral examine process.

Atty. Weinbrake ask us to keep in mind the demographics of the city now and where they are going to be on 2010 census. Keep in mind the demographics of the Reading Fire company. It is a stork contrast regardless whether there is no intentional discrimination. It is the stastical analysis, the disparity is huge. If it is not changed the city is going to be sued by the federal government.

Mr. Ayala and Mr. Jefferson thanks Atty. Weinbrake and Atty. Ludwig for their presents and time!

TO DO,S:

Ildeas and working document on recruitment by next meeting.

ADJOURN:

@6:30pm.Motion by Mr.Torres,second by Miss Stewart. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING APRIL 15,2009. WEDNESDAY @ 5PM in CITY HALL

Respectfully submitted,
Aldora Horne